

THE JEWS IN THE "USE OF YORK".

BY ROBERT FAWTIER.

AGRÉGÉ D'HISTOIRE, ANCIEN MEMBRE DE L'ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE
DE ROME.

IN the service for Good Friday, in the Catholic Church, occurs a set of nine prayers called "*orationes sollemnes*"; they are prayers for the Church,—for the Pope,—for the ecclesiastical hierarchy,—for the Emperor,—for catechumens,—for the suffering: the sick, the hungry, prisoners and seamen,—for the Jews,—for the heathen.

The following is an example of the ritual used for these prayers: ¹

[The priest.] *Oremus, dilectissimi nobis, pro Ecclesia sancta Dei, ut eam Deus et Dominus noster pacificare et custodire dignetur, toto orbe terrarum subiciens ei principatus et potestates, detque nobis quietam et tranquillam vitam de gentibus glorificare Deum patrem omnipotentem. Oremus.*

[The deacon.] *Flectamus genua—Levate.*

[The priest.] *Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui gloriam tuam omnibus in Christo gentibus revelasti, custodi opera misericordiae tuae ut ecclesia tua toto orbe diffusa stabili fide in confessione tui nominis perseveret, per eundem [Christum dominum nostrum Jesum Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate spiritus sancti Deus per omnia secula seculorum.]*

[The congregation.] *Amen.*

In the prayer for the Jews, however, and only in this, the ritual differs: the priest does not say *Oremus* at the end of the first monition, the deacon does not add *Flectamus genua* and *levate*, and the congregation does not kneel.

In his excellent note concerning the prayer for the Jews, M. Canet ²

¹ I quote according to the use of Sarum. The *Sarum Missal*, ed. J. Wickham Legg. Oxford, 1916, 8vo, p. 110.

² Louis Canet, *La prière "pro judaeis" de la liturgie catholique romaine* in *Revue des Etudes Juives*, LXI. 1911, pp. 213-21.

has shown that in the Primitive Church, i.e. before the IXth century, the ritual was the same for the prayer for the Jews as for the others but that, under antisemitic influences, the Church was pressed by the people to alter the ritual, the congregation refusing to obey the injunction of the deacon. M. Canet observes three stages in the evolution of the ritual :—¹

- (1) *Oremus* and *flectamus* (till the IXth century).
- (2) *Oremus* without *flectamus* (IXth-XVIth century).
- (3) Neither *Oremus* nor *flectamus* (after XVIth century).

A manuscript of the John Rylands Library shows us that a fourth stage may perhaps be added to the three discerned by M. Canet.

This manuscript [*Latin* 190] is a codex on vellum of 168 leaves (291 × 199 mm.) formed by the binding together of two manuscripts of which the first only (fa. 1-52) concerns us here. Apart from a few additions in later hands on fo. 7*b* and fo. 8 *a* and *b*, this manuscript is written by one hand in double columns of twenty-one lines, with rubrics and many initials drawn crudely but carefully in red and blue and in a primitive style. It is unfortunately imperfect at the end, but the part which we have contains a most important text of the Missal according to the use of York.²

We can easily fix the date of the writing. Fa. 2-7*a* contain a calendar in which the feast of St. Thomas Becket is correctly placed on the 29th of December.³ This gives a *terminus a quo* which cannot be before 1174, the murdered archbishop having been canonized the 23rd of November, 1173.⁴ As we find the translation of the body of the same saint, written by a decidedly later hand, on the 7th of July,⁵ we can be certain that our manuscript was written before July, 1220.⁶ The strongly marked difference between the writing of the

¹ *eod. loc.*, p. 218.

² This manuscript was utilized by Dr. Henderson for his *Missale ad usum insignis ecclesiae Eboracensis* in *Surtees Society*, LIX. LX. 1874. It was at that time the property of Dean (afterwards Bishop) J. Gott of Leeds. It was purchased by the John Rylands Library in 1912 through Mr. Quaritch.

³ *Latin MS.* 190, fo. 6*b*.

⁴ *The Political History of England*, ed. W. Hunt and R. L. Poole, t. II. p. 297.

⁵ *Latin MS.* 190, fo. 4.

⁶ *The Political History of England*, t. III. p. 19.

feast and that of the translation leads us to conclude that our manuscript was written in the very last years of the XIIth century, and therefore that it is in fact the oldest known copy of the use of York.

We can less easily identify the place where it was written ; we have, however, grounds for a reasonable hypothesis. The calendar gives for St. Hilda's Day, the day of the translation of her body, the 25th of August.¹ As the day generally ascribed for the commemoration of this saint is the 17th of November,² we may conclude that our manuscript must come from a place where the holy body had been preserved, and for which therefore the translation was the anniversary to be commemorated rather than the real feast of the saint. This was the case at Whitby Abbey³ of which St. Hilda was the founder, and from which the holy body had been removed to Glastonbury in the time of the Danish invasion to be restored to its original resting place when the Abbey was practically refounded in the XIth century.⁴

Another point of less weight but worthy of attention is the fact that All Souls' Day is marked in the calendar.⁵ We know that this feast had no official recognition in England before the Council of Oxford in 1222,⁶ and we have shown that our manuscript was written before 1220. But we know that the celebration of this feast was in use in the Cluniac monasteries⁷ a long time before its admission in England and that this admission was due to Cluniac influences. As our manuscript marks this feast in the calendar we may ascribe its origin to a Cluniac monastery. Whitby was a Cluniac house.

We believe, therefore, that we are justified in concluding that the

¹ *Latin MS.* 190, fo. 4b.

² *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, I. 583.

³ Cf. J. Burton, *Monasticon Eboracense*. York, 1758, fol. pp. 68-85. L. Charlton, *The History of Whitby and Whitby Abbey*. York, 1779, 4to, and J. C. Atkinson in his introductory chapters to the *Cartularium Abbatiae de Whiteby* in *Surtees Society*, LXIX. 1879. It is interesting to note that St. Hilda's Day at Whitby was the day of the translation. The yearly fair was appointed on that day by King Henry II. and was held on the same day till the XVIIIth century. L. Charlton, *op. cit.*, I. 139.

⁴ Burton, *loc. cit.*, p. 59. Charlton, *op. cit.*, I. 44.

⁵ *Latin MS.* 190, fo. 6. "*Commemoratio omnium fidelium defunctorum.*"

⁶ Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum amplissima collectio*, XXII. p. 1153.

⁷ Hergenröther and Kaulen, *Kirchenlexikon*, art. Allerseelen.

Rylands manuscript was written in Whitby Abbey in the very last years of the XIIIth century.

The manuscript contains the collects, secrets, and post-communions for the temporal of the year till the 29th Sunday "*post octavas Pentecostis*," which gives us the text of the service for Good Friday.

The prayer for the Jews is composed in the following manner :—¹

Oremus et pro perfidis Judaeis ut Deus et Dominus noster auferat velamen De cordibus eorum ut et ipsi agnoscant Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Oremus.

Hic Flectamus genua [rubric].

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus qui etiam judaicam perfidiam a tua misericordia non repellis, exaudi preces nostras quas tibi pro illius populi obcecatione deferimus, ut agnita veritatis tuae luce quae Christus est a suis tenebris eruantur per eundem.

The rubric has been corrected by the addition in black ink of the word "*non*" (which gives "*Hic non flectamus genua*") in a hand as to which it is difficult to say if it is a much later or a nearly contemporary one. The rubrics for the eight other prayers are : *Oremus. Diaconus : Flectamus genua.*

Two explanations are possible, and we must choose between them : either we have a mere scribe's mistake, or our manuscript gives a new form of the ritual. I accept the second explanation for the following reasons :—

(1) As the scribe is here writing a very exceptional formula in the middle of a series of similar ones, it is reasonable to suppose that his attention would be attracted by the difference and that he copied correctly what was before him.

(2) Even if we accept the correction, the formula used when the *flectamus* is omitted for the Jews is not the one found in our manuscript. The phrase we find in the old English missals is "*Hic non dicitur Flectamus genua*,"² or "*Hic non dicatur Flectamus genua*"³.

¹ *Latin MS.* 190, fo. 30 *a* and *b*.

² *Missale ad usum insignis Ecclesiae Eboracensis*, ed. E. W. Henderson, I. 104. *Missale ad usum percelebris ecclesiae Herfordensis*, ed. W. G. Henderson, 1874, 8vo, p. 93.

³ *The Sarum Missal*, p. 112. M. Canet, *op. cit.*, quotes the continental and some of the earliest English formulas.

(3) The rubric at the beginning of the "*Orationes sollemnes*" gives no indication of a particular ritual for the prayer for the Jews and says only "*Post passionem dicat Episcopus vel sacerdos has orationes*".¹ Contrariwise the later manuscripts of the use of York,² the manuscript of the use of Hereford,³ the manuscript of the use of Sarum,⁴ mark the difference between the ritual for the prayer for the Jews and that of the others.

I therefore conclude that the use of York for the Good Friday service differed at the end of the XIIth century from the others in this particular point. When the priest came to that part of the service where the Jews were prayed for, the deacon was silent, but the congregation preserved the truly Christian custom of kneeling for the Jews, making no difference between them and other men on the day when Christ died for all.

If we are right, the three stages discerned by M. Canet must, at least for the Church of York, be modified as follows:—

(1) *Oremus* and *flectamus* (till the IXth century).

(2) *Oremus* and kneeling of the congregation but without *flectamus* (IXth-XIIIth).

(3) *Oremus* (XIIIth-XVIth century).

(4) No *Oremus* neither *flectamus* (after XVIth century).

And we have here another instance of the preservation of old customs in the English churches.

I do not believe, however, that this practice of kneeling was preserved a long time after the XIIth century. The very slight difference between the writing of the corrector and that of the scribe is evidence that a very short time after the end of the XIIth century the Church of York, like many others, in the Iron Age forgot the gospel of forgiveness.

¹ *Latin MS.* 190, fo. 28.

² p. 103. *Post passionem praelatus, osculato textu, dicat has orationes, stans in dextra parte altaris, sine Dominus vobiscum, et ad unamquamque illarum dicatur "Flectamus genua" nisi ad eam quae pro Judaeis oratur.*

³ p. 91. *LECTA passione in primis fiat oratio pro Ecclesia Sancta Dei et caetera sequentes per ordinem pronuntiante Diacono "Flectamus genua". Pro Judaeis tamen non genua flectant.*

⁴ p. 110. "*Sequantur orationes sollemnes et unamquamque illarum dicatur 'Flectamus genua' nisi ad illam quae pro Judaeis orat.*"